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PURCHASING SPECIALIST SERIES

Series Definition:

This series reflects all professional positions located in the State's central purchasing agency in the Department of Accounting and General Services the duties of which involve performing and/or supervising and managing the purchasing of a wide variety of goods and services for the departments throughout the State through the use of formal purchasing methods requiring the development of detailed, technical specifications. The program purchases goods and services for individual agencies, on request, and prepares contracts for common use commodities and establishes price lists for these items for use by all agencies.

Formal purchasing requires the development of Invitation for Bid (IFB) documentation which includes detailed specifications describing the characteristics of the desired commodity and establishes terms and conditions for its purchase (e.g., qualifications of bidders, delivery/payment and other special requirements) and, depending on the total amount of anticipated cost, advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation either once or three times, and establishment of a contract for the fulfillment of the purchase by the awarded bidder. Positions in this series require substantial skill in the development of detailed specifications for the desired products and special terms and conditions required.

Detailed specifications are developed to define acceptable quality levels, functions and other characteristics of goods, materials, equipment and services desired to ensure that the user, purchasing specialist and vendors mutually understand what is to be supplied. They also ensure that all competitors have the same information for bidding purposes, ensure that the item(s) purchased will be suited to the end uses and provide for the testing of products and evaluation of bids in a fair and equitable manner.

The work requires the examination and analysis of user requirements to gain a good understanding of the nature of the material, equipment or service required and the development of specifications which describe required characteristics without unduly restricting or confining competition. Positions in this series also analyze disputes between users and suppliers after the award of contracts to ensure fair and equitable settlement between them which may include mediating between the user and supplier to reach a mutually agreeable settlement of disputes or dissatisfactions. They also make recommendations as to the disposition of failures to fulfill contractual requirements and may provide information for litigation to resolve contract disagreements.

The work includes reviewing bids, recommending award and reviewing contract documentation for completeness. In this program the contract document consists of the specifications with added general and/or special provisions. Deputy Attorneys General review for format.

The development of invitation for bids and the carrying out of formal purchasing procedures is conducted by this program to provide services to any department requesting such assistance. In addition to discussing requirements extensively with such requesting users to understand the particular circumstances and requirements of the purchase, specialists may advise and assist users in determining and clarifying product requirements when the user requests such assistance. They also may recommend need for a sole-source or restrictive bidding exemption when circumstances so indicate.

The State's central purchasing program is also concerned with the development of price lists for common use commodities; i.e., items required by many agencies such as office supplies and equipment, lumber, hardware, etc. Formal purchasing procedures (i.e., IFB, advertisement, etc.) are used. A price list consists of items for which contracts have been established to supply potential State's needs for those items. Thereafter, any agency desiring an item on the list need only to contact the awarded vendor for the item for delivery at the previously agreed to cost. The advantages of developing a price list is that of volume buying power and decrease in duplication of purchasing efforts.

Such work includes the development of price lists for new commodity groups never addressed before by the central agency (although various line agencies may have been purchasing such items on a small quantity basis through informal means), the addition of new items to existing price lists, or the establishment of new contracts for new time periods for existing price lists ("rebidding" price lists). The specialist assigned a new commodity area conducts studies to determine what items are applicable to that commodity area (e.g., an assignment may be to develop a price list for computer supplies. That can include diskettes, paper, daisy wheels, printer ribbons, printers, multiplexers, modems, etc.).

A survey questionnaire is then distributed to all agencies to determine the demand for such items. Those which appear to be of sufficiently frequent demand are considered for placement on the price list. The specialist then works with users to determine acceptable products and develops detailed specifications for each item to be placed on the price list and to identify and specify terms and conditions which will provide maximum service to all users. The completed Invitation for Bid is then advertised, the award made and the agencies notified of the new price list. Other assignments involve reviews of previously established price lists for the addition of items and for rebidding of the price list.

Work on price lists ranges from routine (e.g., rebidding of pre-existing price lists or addition of a new item to a price list) through moderately difficult (e.g., development of price lists for products which have relatable, similar price lists) to complex/difficult (e.g., dealing with new and highly technical commodities). Working with multiple users in determining terms and conditions most appropriate to meet the majority of needs and acceptability of products and specifications may or may not present problems, as compared to dealing with individual users in single purchases, depending on the range of special requirements involved and other factors. The development of price lists, per se, therefore is neither series nor level determining. Examination of the nature of the commodities for which specifications are being developed and the nature of responsibilities imposed on the specialist needs to be identified to determine the level of the position.

Positions in this series perform professional work analyzing unique user requirements and developing of specifications requiring analytical ability, a high level of writing skill and the use of judgment in determining contents of specifications so as to not unduly restrict competition to describe desired products, materials or services clearly. Such work also includes foreseeing potential problem situations which may arise in user circumstances to accommodate and write them into specifications to prevent future problems in the purchase, its delivery, etc.

Professional positions in this series develop specifications for products, materials, equipment, services, etc., or are in trainee positions for such work. Positions which perform work in formalized purchasing but are not involved in specifications development are not necessarily considered professional nor allocable to this series. E.g., if the extent of a position's involvement in formal purchasing is to make necessary bidding/advertisement and related arrangements for purchase of a computer system for which consultants or the user writes the specifications it does not meet the requirements for professional performance as defined in this specification.

Every purchase over \$4,000 requires the same process: i.e., review of user needs, development of specifications, advertisement, review of bids, determination of the lowest responsible bidder, recommendation for award, review of contracts for completeness and follow-up to resolve contract administration problems as required. However, the extent to which judgment and analysis is required is dependent on the amount and kind of precedents available and the inherent nature of the purchase. The following levels have been identified:

Routine and Repetitive Purchases: These consist of purchases where direct precedents are available such as in the renewal of a contract for the same service for the same agency of the same characteristics, terms, etc.; or for the rebidding of common use commodities price lists for statewide use. Some review of pre-existing material is required to ensure continued currency but no substantial research, development of specifications and little or no amendment of overall documentation is required, if any.

Moderately Difficult Purchases: These are (a) purchases for which there are indirect precedents such as in the purchase of security services for an agency which never had security services before. In this example, precedents in the form of security contracts for a number of other agencies are available to provide the specialist with a general approach to the assignment, characteristics of the purchase to look for, etc.; or (b) any purchase which is new or unique which does not meet the requirements for Complex Purchases, described below.

Complex Purchases: Complex purchases require substantial judgment to determine essential descriptive and other criteria, and to differentiate between users' needs and preferences. Generally they have the following characteristics:

1. New Purchases:

- a. Require substantial research (catalogs, discussion with vendors, reference texts, consultants, etc.) to determine the essential characteristics and features of the desired kind of product/service; and
- b. Have no direct or indirect precedents within the organization for the requested type of product/service to be purchased; and
- c. Require substantial discussion with users to clarify and identify needs and how they relate to requirements and features of the desired product/service; and
- d. Have one or more of the following added features:
 - 1) Consist of multiple features, functions or phases each of which requires description. Substantial skill is required in identifying essential requirements for each of these features or functions and to describe them clearly and adequately but to also avoid over-restriction of the product which may unreasonably restrict competition; and/or
 - 2) Involve scientific or technical equipment necessitating a description of characteristics in technical language which requires an understanding of the technical terminology used and the implications of technical characteristics on the products' functioning. Difficulty in determining essential characteristics as opposed to non-essential although desirable characteristics may also be a factor; and/or
 - 3) Involve equipment of such size, scope or nature that extensive coordination with the user is required to identify and foresee special problems and needs such as site preparation requirements (e.g., special construction for placement, reinforcement, shielding, etc. may be required as well as special terms for shipment, transportation, maintenance, testing, payment) and to develop specifications accordingly; and/or
 - 4) Are of such cost and impact on the user's program (i.e., in the order of millions of dollars of expenditure for one purchase) that novel or special requirements are necessary to ensure bidders are financially or otherwise qualified to fulfill contractual requirements; and/or

- 5) Involve critical delivery and quality requirements such that extensive study and questioning of the user's operations is required to identify problem areas and to write in safeguards for assured performance (e.g., purchasing and delivery of election ballots for which there are restricted time frames and for which perfect performance is mandatory); and/or
- 6) Other comparable complexities.

2. Products for Which Precedents Are Available:

- a. Products/services which tend to be unique to each user because user needs significantly and substantially affect the nature and characteristics of the purchase. Such products require a significant understanding of the user operations to assure adequate descriptions and coverage of essential features in the specifications. Examples of such products are computer or communications systems.
- b. Products which are subject to such rapid technological change that previous research and precedents are outdated within short periods of time requiring continual re-researching to keep abreast of new developments and extensive contact with the user.
- c. Other comparable complexities.

Although positions in the central purchasing program are assigned purchasing projects by commodity groups (and as experience is gained, may be responsible for several major groupings), determination of level is based on the complexity of purchases made (i.e., routine/repetitive, moderately complex or complex as a majority assignment) rather than whether the specialist has mastered one or more commodity grouping. At the senior worker level where the majority of work consists of complex purchases, the specialist would typically be assigned cross-commodity group purchasing assignments.

In addition to determining level by the nature of purchases, the levels in this series are defined by differences in the (a) nature and variety of work performed; (b) nature and extent of supervisory control over incumbents; (c) nature of guidelines available; (d) complexity of work performed; (e) personal contacts required; (f) supervisory skills required of incumbents; (g) managerial responsibilities; and (h) knowledge and skills required.

This is the first class specification for the new classes PURCHASING SPECIALIST I, II, III, IV, V.

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/s/ James H. Takushi

JAMES H. TAKUSHI

Director of Personnel Services

PURCHASING SPECIALIST I

2.626

Duties Summary:

Receives orientation and training in the principles, statutes, techniques, work processes and procedures related to government purchasing and specifications development work; and performs other related duties as assigned.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

This is the entry level in the series designed to provide orientation and training in government purchasing and specifications development work. A position in this class reads a wide variety of materials to gain familiarity with purchasing specifications development work and performs simple assignments under close supervision. Assignments are part of a planned and organized training program and are characterized by detailed instructions and close review of work in progress and upon completion. A position at this level gains familiarity with the commodities and services assigned by reading a wide variety of material and through discussions with more experienced personnel and with users and vendors.

Examples of Duties:

Performs assigned readings and prepares required reports; receives orientation and training in purchasing and specification development procedures and pertinent laws, rules, regulations and policies; performs various assignments in maintaining purchasing files, catalogs, manuals and records, collecting and tabulating purchasing data, relaying factual information, and similar work to apply training; talks to various people and reads a variety of material to learn the characteristics and sources of information and supply of various commodities and services; prepares specifications, terms and conditions for simple repetitive purchases including rebids of common use commodity price lists; evaluates bids and recommends awards; prepares purchase orders for approval; contacts vendors on contract administration matters such as late delivery, overage/shortage, delivery schedule, etc.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

Knowledge of: Proper English grammar, punctuation and word usage; arithmetic; report writing.

Ability to: Learn the principles and practices of governmental purchasing and the characteristics and sources of information and supply of assigned supplies, materials, equipment, and services; gather, analyze and evaluate facts and data, make inferences, draw conclusions and recommend sound alternatives for action consistent with facts, circumstances, guidelines, etc.; learn to conduct effective interviews; speak clearly and effectively; prepare clear, complete, concise reports; maintain effective working relationships.

PURCHASING SPECIALIST II

2.627

Duties Summary:

As an advanced trainee, performs routine to moderately difficult purchasing and specifications development work; and performs other related duties as assigned.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

This class reflects the advanced trainee through which the trainee advances as part of the progression to full performance as an independent worker. A position in this class performs a variety of assignments ranging from routine to moderately difficult in the purchasing of a wide range of supplies, equipment and services and the development of purchasing specifications.

Supervision is relaxed on simple, routine and/or recurring purchasing assignments, and is initially close and immediate for moderately difficult assignments, decreasing to general supervision during the latter period at this level. Complex purchases are performed under close supervision to further professional development during the latter period at this level.

Examples of Duties:

Reads various materials and talks to appropriate personnel to gain understanding of various commodities and services and of State programs and functions; discusses requirements, specifications and alternatives with requisitioners; secures price quotations and delivery promises, and selects vendors on the basis of best bids; interviews vendors' representatives; reviews existing specifications for consistency of language and format and determines need for updating relative to new features, models, etc., in the industry; drafts new specifications or modifies and recommends changes or revisions to existing specifications, terms and conditions to improve language or to incorporate special user requirements or new developments; deals with users and vendors to resolve contract administration matters such as delivery problems, overages/shortages, damaged goods, poor quality, or non-conformance to specifications, and recommends assessment of penalties or other action or refers to supervisor as appropriate; conducts rebids of price lists and analyses; develops specifications for and conducts the addition to or establishment of new price lists; performs complex purchasing activities under close supervision.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

In addition to knowledge and abilities required at the next lower level, must have:

Knowledge of: Basic knowledge of government purchasing statutes, principles, practices and procedures; interviewing techniques; common use and assigned commodities and services.

Ability to: Conduct interviews, conduct studies and develop specifications, terms and conditions for routine to moderately difficult formally advertised purchasing actions.

PURCHASING SPECIALIST III

2.628

Duties Summary:

Independently performs the full range of purchasing and specifications development work; makes independent analysis of users' requirements and prepares appropriate specifications, terms and conditions; and performs other related duties as assigned.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

This is the fully independent journeyworker level in the series. Work assignments range from the routine updating of bid list specifications through complex purchases of new technical equipment or services; however, the predominant work assignment is of a moderately difficult nature.

A position at this level uses seasoned professional judgment and discretion to determine essential procurement criteria, differentiate between needs and preferences of users, determine appropriate type of specifications to develop depending on the nature of purchase and to resolve or recommend solutions to contract administration problems, etc.

Work is performed independently on a day to day basis; however the supervisor is consulted when clarification of new policies and procedures is required, or when there are legal problems resulting from the interpretation of the specifications, terms and conditions of a particular contract, or when unusual, unprecedented problems arise.

Examples of Duties:

Discusses requirements, specifications and alternatives with requisitioners; expands product knowledge and of sources of supply by reading various materials and discussions with users, vendors, consultants and others; identifies product characteristics and analyzes their significance; advises users to justify sole source or restrictive purchases when appropriate; determines the type of specifications most appropriate for each purchasing requirement; prepares specifications, terms and conditions to meet the minimum requirements of the user while assuring maximum competition; determines a fair and equitable method of evaluating bids; conducts pre-bid conferences as required; determines whether bids meet specifications and legal requirements; computes cost as applicable, e.g., when life cycle or other costing methods are used to determine price; prepares summary sheets listing acceptable bids and identifies lowest responsible bid;

recommends awards, drafts letters of rejection for bids which do not meet the specifications, terms and conditions or other requirements; reviews contracts covering the purchase for completeness; resolves contract administration problems or recommends assessment of penalties or other actions to supervisor as necessary; prepares reports and drafts correspondence related to contract administration problems; conducts studies for the expansion of price lists or the development of new price lists and follows through on required purchasing steps; prepares reports and correspondence; provides information regarding the State's procurement statutes, policies and procedures and sources of supply, product quality, etc. to users, line purchasing staff and others; may assist in guiding and training new employees or line purchasing personnel and may provide advice to other specialists on purchases related to assigned commodity groups and services.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

In addition to knowledge and abilities required at lower levels, positions at this level require:

Knowledge of: Purchasing statutes, principles, practices, rules, policies and procedures; appropriate type of purchasing specifications for differing purchasing requirements; various bid evaluation methods; market conditions and trends of assigned commodities and services; sources of supply and information for a wide variety of commodities and services.

Ability to: Draft specifications for the full range of procurement actions including complex/technical purchases; conduct the full range of studies; resolve contract administration problems or recommend appropriate solution.

PURCHASING SPECIALIST IV

2.629

Duties Summary:

Serves as a senior worker making complex purchases the majority of time; or as a staff assistant conducts special studies of program operations, policies, methods, troubleshoots and recommends changes and improvements to program operations, methods, etc. and assists in guiding lower level specialists; or manages the State's centralized copier management program for the statewide control of copy machines; or serves as a working supervisor over journey-level specialists; and performs other related duties as assigned.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

This class reflects the following types of positions:

A. A senior specialist engaged in conducting purchasing whose majority of assignments consist of complex purchases. A position of this type may also advise and train lower level specialists in unusual or highly technical or rarely used purchasing techniques and may assist in supervising lower level specialists.

B. A staff specialist reporting to the division administrator whose assignments include providing assistance to the administrator on a regular basis by preparing special reports, conducting studies regarding the program, its relations with other operations, statutory requirements, etc., and recommending improvements for statewide or internal use; troubleshooting; developing policy, procedural and other manuals and conducting complex and/or the full range of purchasing assignments. A position of this type may also advise and assist lower level specialists on unusual or highly technical or rarely used purchasing techniques and may assist in supervising them.

C. The specialist whose major assignment consists of managing the State's centralized copier management program for the statewide control of copier machines. The scope of work includes the development of standards, policies and procedures relative to the management and accountability for copy machines, review and recommendation of the approval or disapproval of requests to purchase copy machines, continual monitoring of the cost effectiveness and appropriate use of existing copy machines and contracting to acquire copier equipment and supplies for price lists and individual State agencies.

D. A working supervisor who performs a full range of purchasing and who also supervises a few subordinates performing the full range of purchasing work as described at the next lower level.

In all situations, positions perform work independently within general procedural and administrative guidelines. The supervisor is generally consulted only on complex and technical questions not covered by policy or precedents.

Examples of Duties:

A. Conducts complex and difficult purchases the majority of time; discusses requirements, specifications and alternatives with users; develops product knowledge of highly technical/complex purchases by reading a wide variety of reference materials and through discussions with users, vendors, manufacturers, consultants and others; identifies product characteristics and analyzes their significance; evaluates products; may initiate testing or request demonstration as required; determines the type of specifications most appropriate for each purchasing requirement; prepares specifications for formally advertised bids; determines a fair and equitable method of evaluating bids for each purchase; incorporates special, highly technical or unusual requirements regarding bidder qualifications or other factors as required; determines acceptability of bids, identifies low bidders, recommends awards and drafts letters of notification and rejection; resolves contract administration problems or recommends assessment of penalties or other actions to supervisor as necessary; prepares reports and drafts correspondence; explains purchasing statutes, policies and procedures; may train, guide, or provide advice to lower level specialists.

B. Develops bidding procedures and contract methods for complex/technical common use commodities not previously managed by the program; studies the impact of the program on outside activities or the effect of changes of outside activities on the program (e.g., changes in commodity prices, business practices, shipping strikes, etc.); serves as troubleshooter for a wide range of complaints which could not be resolved at lower levels regarding procedures followed, product quality, contract performance, late payments, unfair or biased actions, etc.; evaluates the impact of program activities on relevant statutes, rules and regulations and recommends solutions to problem areas; develops instructional sheets for bidders and purchasing policy guidelines and manuals for internal and external use; participates in analyzing and developing legislative proposals for the amendment of laws to meet changes in business practices and other conditions; conducts studies, analyzes and develops specifications for complex purchases including individual requests or for common-use commodities; evaluates bids and recommends awards; provides assistance and guidance to lower level specialists; prepares various administrative reports.

C. Manages the statewide centralized copier management program; evaluates requests for the purchase, lease/rent or lease/rent contract extension for all State copy machines; makes recommendations to approve, disapprove or to pursue other alternatives such as machine sharing, upgrading or downgrading; conducts continuous studies of existing copiers to examine benefits and determine cost saving methods and alternatives; determines feasibility of decentralization or centralization of copiers and appropriateness of copier relative to user requirements; develops standards, policies, procedures and long range plans for the centralized statewide control of the acquisition and utilization of copy machines; continually reviews users' needs and keeps abreast of new developments and technologies in the copy machine field; studies user needs and determines minimum purchasing requirements; prepares appropriate specifications, terms and conditions; determines method of evaluating bids received and makes award recommendations; monitors contract performance and serves as liaison between users and contractors; may conduct the full range of purchasing for other products and services as assigned.

D. Supervises and participates in purchasing a wide range of commodities and services requiring formally advertised sealed bids; assigns and reviews the work of subordinates; supervises and participates in developing specifications, terms and conditions, evaluating bids and recommending appropriate awards and resolving contract administration problems; supervises and participates in the testing and evaluation of supplies, materials and equipment for quality, suitability and other factors; discusses the need for and approves the holding of pre-bid conferences by subordinates; guides and trains new employees; recommends changes to operational policies and procedures; prepares various reports; assists in personnel management functions such as recommending staffing and training needs, initiating requests for personnel action, recommending approval of leaves, evaluating job performance of subordinates, etc.; drafts correspondence.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

In addition to knowledge and abilities at lower levels, positions at this level require:

Knowledge of: Thorough knowledge of State purchasing statutes, rules, policies and procedures.

Ability to: Develop specifications for the most complex purchasing actions; conduct highly complex studies; develop statewide purchasing policies, procedures and guidelines; develop legislative proposals; and for some positions, train and supervise others.

PURCHASING SPECIALIST V

2.630

Duties Summary:

Supervises a staff of specialists engaged in the development of a wide variety of specifications for formal purchasing requirements in the State's centralized purchasing program and in conducting the statewide copier management program; and performs other related duties as assigned.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

This level reflects full time supervisory responsibility over a large staff of specialists engaged in purchasing a wide range of commodities and services requiring formally advertised sealed bid purchases involving the development of specifications, terms and conditions, bid evaluation and resolution of contract administration problems and in conducting the statewide copier management program.

The position in this class works under the general supervision of the program administrator. Considerable latitude for independent judgment is permitted for planning, scheduling and supervising the work of subordinate specialists. The work includes responsibility for reviewing internal, departmental, and statewide requirements affecting the centralized purchasing program and establishing guidelines and procedures or formulating new or amended policies for the use of staff as required to clarify requirements, improve operations or meet new legal or other requirements.

Examples of Duties:

Plans, coordinates, supervises and reviews the work of purchasing specialists involved in the purchasing of a wide variety of supplies, materials, equipment and services through formally advertised bid procedures; reviews drafts of specifications and special terms and conditions prepared by subordinates for overall technical adequacy; corrects, revises or refers material back to subordinates for further study as appropriate; approves revisions and changes to previous documentation; opens bid proposals in response to invitations for bid and refers to specialists for award recommendation; reviews award recommendations and ensures that each bid is properly evaluated and that the proper method of purchase is prescribed (e.g., by purchase order or by formal contract with or without contract certification) and that award implementation is complete; determines appropriate corrective action when a contractor does not perform in accordance with

contract or purchase order terms and resolves disputes between users and vendors referred by staff; recommends legal action; approves or disapproves all extensions of contracts or rebid of existing price lists; clarifies, revises, or develops purchasing policies, procedures, practices and guidelines for the use of staff as required; reviews outgoing correspondence drafted by staff; advises and assists professional staff in problem areas; performs personnel management functions such as recommending staffing and training needs, initiating requests for personnel actions, approving requests for leave, resolving disciplinary problems; prepares and maintains data and reports of work activities.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

In addition to knowledge and abilities required at lower levels, positions at this level require:

Knowledge of: The principles and practices of supervision.

Ability to: Plan, coordinate and supervise the activities of a group of purchasing specialists engaged in the formal purchasing of a very wide range of commodities and services including those of a complex and technical nature.